



## April 2003

.....The albums have not continued as originally planned due to my new love..’the digital camera’. It has answered all the wishes I had had with my trusty old ‘Pentax’ (now hanging sadly in my office- unused but not forgotten)- namely a size that I can carry around without the services of a native bearer and best of all the immediate results that I can print myself or download and bore the knickers off anyone foolish enough to be around after a shooting session. I look at the new list of photos on the PC or on the lap top and play back the memories as a slideshow. The shots seem alive and dare I say it ...“even better than the albums” A dilemma-what shall I do to continue what has after all become a life-time work that I enjoy and love to use as sort of diary of my life? I have thought that possibly a montage sheet of each session taking the best shots for a sort-of album and keeping the total shots on the pc. That way I will continue the albums in a sort of fashion with the added pleasure of the photos in their entirety being available to view when I want to.

An update on a personal level....

Tammy has married our great new son-in-law,



Ben and much as Lynn and I loved having Larnie with us so often she is so happy with Ben as a father and he is smitten with her. Tammy and Ben are so happy and we see so little of her now and it is as it should be. Larnie is growing up surrounded by love and we are very proud and happy with the whole new Hur family. We could not have hoped for a better relationship and we have the feeling that both having had some sad times has given them a better appreciation of the value of one another and ‘family’. Enough said.



DP travelling as usual... ..returned bronzed and happy last week from a 3 month stint in Australia via Kuala Lumpa and stayed two nights (during which time we passed on the stairs)..he took over the washing machine pinched a pair of my best socks and departed to the South of France.



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Life is good for us personally now. Lynn and I go to the theatre quite often and today we went out with mum to a country fresh produce market in a Hertfordshire village hall (Sandon) where we bought stacks of fresh meat, jams, cakes etc had lunch in Huntington and came back in time to give blood locally. The weather is really strange-yesterday sunbathing all day in the garden and today it is freezing!. Mum has got a swollen foot and is currently using a stick to assist with getting around. She is still very alert and fun to take around with us. She has a lot of friends and is very independent. We speak every day and Lynny is great with her because she can be difficult at times but Lynn never is short with her. I know Lynny does not want to continue working much longer and as the business is slowly improving I hope that she will be able to 'retire' soon. She is great fun and a really

special person. She came (reluctantly) to a jazz night  last night (Alex Welsh revival) at the Chicken Shed and had the good grace to admit she quite enjoyed it!! We walked back in 20 minutes.....beat that you youngsters.

A quick note to Tammy and DP (and Ben and Larnie). We are so proud of the four of you and love you so much. We admit that we 'interfere' more than we should but the 'duchess' and I only want the best for you all. Tammy and DP - you have never been what one would call 'conventional' but that is a compliment in our eyes. The way you both behave, the nice attitudes, thoughtfulness in so many ways are appreciated and we respect you both and we could not wish for better kids.

Larnie you are special. The way you have come into our lives and shine like a ray of sunshine lighting every corner. Do not change, stay cheerful, do not become spoilt and continue in the enquiring way that is special to you and will get you on in life.

Ben, your cheerfulness is your passport to the Kley family...with the sense of humour that you so obviously have (and need with Tammy!!) you will make a wonderful husband and father..I'm sorry, I mean you ARE a wonderful husband and father. Things on a global scale with the aftermath of a messy (Seemingly pointless Iraqi war) do not give me good vibes. I feel that there will be a Moslem backlash and I feel that the ripples will hit all our lives. Crowding is now a major issue and lots of what we seem to do is join crowds in a vain effort to seek solitude. Relaxing and trying to appreciate what we have rather than constantly striving for more and more seems to me to be something we should all take time to consider. The rich man with homes all over the world can only live in one home at a time, sleep in one bed and eat one meal...so in that way we are equal after all. (except he has got bigger bills with the exception of the phone bill ...hey Tammy).

Enough...with no one putting on the brakes he does rabbit on.....

Thought for anyone mad enough to be reading this....

Enjoy life as a mystery not as a problem waiting to be solved.....

And dance wildly as if no one is there to watch you

On with the latest pictures.....



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.....As there has been quite a long period without pictures being put into the album some may appear out of sequence but as they are dated I hope you can sort them out and it will make sense.



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### August 2003

A hot time-days hotter than The Bahamas. Tammy and Ben at the beach with their family. DP at various locations (over here at present) and Lynn and I having impromptu bbq's in the garden..Just us, a disposable bbq, a couple of steaks (and all the trimmings) and sitting with the fountain gurgling behind us. Simple pleasures and oh so sweet.



"pass the ketchup darling"

If you look at 'The Green Gathering' photos you may want to hear (or hear again) the story behind our visit to DP at that festival.

" Hey Folks, come and see our great new act – we've got a gig in the hills near Cheddar Gorge...come and see us"

"Yes, that'll be great" chorused his mates.

Always game for a new experience we booked a b&b on the internet that appeared to be close to the area where our prodigal son was appearing.

We arrived at around 7.30am having left home at the unearthly hour of 4.45am (the previous night's guests were just coming down to breakfast.) We dumped our bags explained why we were going to return very late and had a great day at the sea in Sidmouth...boy was it hot.

We then worked out where The Festival was only to find that the b&b was over one hour away from the site. When we arrived at the site at 6.00pm (rather tired by now) we found that DP had left the tickets under his name & not ours (this took quite a time to sort out). Tagged and ticketed we eventually made our way through hundreds of people to the massive car park area explaining that we had to leave that night.

"No problem" the main gate will be closed until 8.00am" said the main steward but he indicated the direction of a side exit that we would be allowed out of. Leaving the car close to the temporary surfaced road we made our weary way through fields and fields of tents, sculptures, horses, washing lines, WC's that could be found without the need for arrows!!. The way was very muddy despite the good weather...That was an indication of things to come. My prodigal son was there but he did not arrange for the prodigal sun to be there.





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This giant rig all his own work - towered above the surrounding tents and attractions and cycling youngsters generated the power to run music and lights. That was when we were casually told that the show was now at 12.00am not 10.00pm as originally expected.

Stifling tired yawns we enjoyed the organic food, the great music, the original willow sculptures, the solar powered showers until at around 9.30pm we retired to the car for a cat-nap setting the alarm for 11.30pm to allow us time to get back to the show area. We were woken not by the alarm but by heavy rain beating a staccato rhythm on the car roof. Then came our first revelation...no lights anywhere...thousands of cars and once you left yours it was an almost impossible task to find it again.

"We've come this far, we will watch the show". I think that was the last words I uttered before I went face down in a sea of smelly mud. Now I've seen mud before, but there is mud and there is mud and then there is *Festival Site Mud*. It has a glutinous texture and a smell all of its own and I was in it. Lynn hung onto me, at least she hoped it was me as I was just a disembodied voice from below her.

"Follow the path" we agreed was the only solution. We came to the immediate conclusion that it was impossible to walk, impossible to see and even in the unlikely event of us finding DP in a field a distance away, the show would probably be cancelled because of the rain and then we still had to return to find our car. Not a difficult solution. We slid back to the car and lowered our sticky smelly anoraks onto the valeted plush seats. Next came the problem to get out.

"No mate" check your tickets you will see that your contract says gates are closed overnight and you can't leave till 8.00am" said Mr Jobsworth in his green fluorescent jacket.

Oh Mate you do not know how close you came to getting turned into a mud pie by my sweet wife. She then commandeered a passing Land Rover with the words, "Stay there, we are getting our car and you will lead us to the exit." The guy realised that to protest to my missus was not an option. I was speechless but a mouthful of mud has that effect.

Getting the car and following behind the amazed Land Rover was great for a short distance and then just as I expected, the second we were off the plastic-sheeted road wheels span and there we were. Pitch dark, pouring, covered in mud and now stuck as well. Lynn almost pulled the guys out of the Land Rover and between us pushing and everyone giving opposite advice. " Put it in neutral"    "steer right"    "Put it in top"    "Steer left" Everyone's an expert, but eventually we actually got some purchase from the tyres and slowly made our



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way along a ridge that was not yet a sea of mud. We nearly kissed the guys opening the gate at the exit.

We could not see out of the mud covered windscreen and driving was difficult along dark country lanes when suddenly we realised that we couldn't see out of the side windows either...it was fog, just to add to the general hilarity of the night and we could have been tucked up in bed!! Slowly we made our way back to the b& b. The only light was an annoying little yellow light on the dashboard. Oh no!.....we are out of petrol.

Lynn's plea to the amazed guy on the RAC rescue phone line was met with an amusing retort " You youngsters are all the same" . She didn't have the heart to put him right...she was probably old enough to be his Grandma. Yet another near kiss greeted the local cheerful garage breakdown truck which rescued us from a pitch dark 'closed' garage in the back of beyond.

2.15am a tired smelly couple of happy hippies arrived at the b&b. If we had been seen the doors would have been locked and the dogs set loose.

.....Now maybe the photos will have more meaning





A holiday in Kerala (South India) Sept 26<sup>th</sup> -October 6<sup>th</sup> 2003



*A diary extract whilst slowly travelling in a converted rice barge along the backwaters*





Tuesday 30<sup>th</sup> September

A steamy night with a tropical rainstorm wakes us from our fitful sleep. The small raffia-type widows are quickly closed. The sounds of music and chanting, the occasional cockerel and human voices echo across the still water. We are moored in the centre of the river at a junction with another river and the boat slowly rotates on its anchor and we are disorientated getting a different perspective as we slowly turn. Earlier as we had docked we were escorted by our skipper and guided through a small bank-side village where single storey tiny shops displayed mineral bottles, fresh fruit and daily wares. No one seems to find our presence intrusive and if we get any reaction it is a happy smile and wave. As we walked to the larger hut, which is a sort of fish communal warehouse, we select four giant prawns which were held in a large box of ice. These appeared later wonderfully fried for our supper





We continued walking through the village into the dusty bustling market area with a small temple and shrine surrounded by waving yellow flags and streamers. Crossing the road we narrowly avoided a constant stream of multi-coloured coaches, tuc-tucs, bikes and old cars on our way to the beach. The beach and sea, never far from the lakes and lagoons is the special point was our destination where we were to witness the sunset. Due to our closeness to the equator darkness descended at a great speed and the local boys splashing in the water laughingly asked us to take a photo of them.



The beach is drenched in a red glow and the wispy clouds added a surreal quality to the scene

The beach stretched into the distance as a few local people enjoyed the last moments of daylight



Darkness made the return to the moored boat an exercise in pot-hole avoidance but we arrived with a smiling guide delighted that we had enjoyed the sunset in what must have been a special place for him as well. Moving into the centre of the river we spend the night calmly and slowly moving round the anchor.

Waking up, we shower in the small but clean bathroom. The bedroom is divided from the main body of the boat by delightful coconut and coir matting with bamboo edges giving a Japanese tea-house effect. All the windows are raffia type small shutters and it is very 'at one' with the surroundings. A converted rice barge put to a good use and not conspicuous in its traditional home. The crew of three greet us with a smile and attend



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To their duties of cooking, navigating and minding the engine. As we walk along the coir-matted floor to the bows we are pleased to see our flask of tea awaits us on the yellow check table cloth

The morning is magic: as we slowly rotate the whole local life awakens around us. We are a part of it and yet apart from it. A voyeuristic look at a totally different world without the undignified feeling that one is an outsider. The pink-shirted canoeist ferries locals from bank to bank, people going to the paddy fields to work and others going to the small shops for their daily needs. Boats pass with cement and bricks and fishermen going for mussels and small kingfish



A cockerel crows its morning wake-up call and as people wash in the river you can hear every sound so clearly you feel like whispering. A family opposite sit on a seat at the side of their house and you can hear them talking. Every splash echoes across as the elegant ladies in their vivid saris slap the washing on the stones to clean them. Small children in smart school uniforms now appear walking along the banks. The narrow banks along both sides of the lagoons and lakes support a vast population of smallholders and a rich diversity of plant and animal life. The water is as still as a millpond reflecting the coconut palms along the bank

Our navigator dons his requisite scruffy peaked cap and sitting cross-legged in the bows he raises his black umbrella to shield his head from the rapidly warming sun. Two tugs on the bell pull is answered by the barely imperceptible glug from the rear outboard and we slowly commence our new journey. Slowly with no perceptible ripples we glide over small plants broken away from the vast matted areas of water vegetation drifting past





At the door of every small house a child appears as though by magic with a grin and a



wave and usually the universal call "pen please" is shouted after us. Graceful ladies clad in vivid saris elegantly and shyly smile at us and we feel guilty if we miss a wave and smile.

Each small basic dwelling is a microcosm of self-sufficiency with the two goats or a water buffalo tethered and chewing contentedly on the lush bank-side growth. Washing is draped on the tropical vegetation to dry and palms are pregnant with the heavy crop of coconuts. School uniforms contrast stridently against the drab colours of the buildings and the girls have vivid bows in their hair



The sky reflected in the smooth dark greens and blues of the smooth wide channel is broken by drifting clumps of reeds in spectacular colours and shapes. Some pale purple and some deep red vivid blooms pass smoothly under our bows undisturbed by our passing.

Stopping for spices at Chambakulah, we moored alongside the small village



*Moored at Chambakulah*



*Carving religious objects*



*Inside the Catholic Church*

spread laterally along the river bank with stall-like shops displaying wares such as brightly coloured sweets and cakes and useful cooking pots, pans and colourful plastic buckets. My spices were found down a small alley all surprisingly and enterprisingly in ticketed plastic bags. This was a first and indicated the business-like nature of the vendor (originally a cab driver in Trivendrum). Nevertheless I selected a selection of



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spices including fresh cardamoms, unbroken cinnamon sticks, shiny nutmegs, etc for a discounted price.

Removing our shoes we viewed the matted Catholic church curiously void of seating when it was explained that the devotion took place kneeling with the exception of the elderly who utilised the few rear seats . Wonderful vegetable paints were used on the attractive painted roof surrounded by angelic painted faces and carved lotus flowers.

We moored again on the opposite bank to see a mighty snake boat lovingly housed in its long narrow shelter. Holding 120 rowers, drummers and steerers when used in competitions it is 111' long. It is only 3'0" wide and sits patiently awaiting the noise of its crew who lovingly polish it and row it triumphantly to add more trophies to impressively long list



After a short while we moor again in the centre of the river by a bend and deep-fried butter fish cutlets are served with a big plate of fluffy large grained rice, two dishes of vegetables - one a sliced green bean-like vegetable that we had previously only seen in pickles and a hot sweet shredded red beetroot accompanied the mild vegetable samba. Crispy poppadoms and iced bottled water preceeded the sweet dessert of a milk vermicelli with cashews and sultanas-all washed down with black lemon tea



A sunny snooze on the mattress on deck followed

dreamily on.....



More children finish lunch at school and washes his or her plate in the river. Some must finish mid-day as they make their way to the small ferry canoes ready to cross to their homes. Smart uniforms and satchels so large they seem to dwarf the small bodies and



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many with bare feet. The young girls have brilliant red slides and bows. No mad rushing and no horseplay - just a civilised end to their day.

6.00am...we slowly wake from our sleep. The thin sheet pushed to one side. Outside we can see the dawn breaking and as we lie prone and half awake we can see canoes passing level with our window with chattering people on their way to work in the paddy fields. They wave and smile delightedly acknowledging our sleepy waves. Taking a shower in the "wet room" we feel instantly wide awake. As we clean our teeth with the bottled water we marvel at the total contrast to our usual morning surroundings.

As the sun rises the light gives a magic quality to the water and the gold, red and blues sparkle in the ripples. The sound of the birds and the voices across the fields added to the hum of the occasional outboard drift across the wide river. Across from our boat on the distant bank is a single line of coconut palms and where they end canoes appear making their way diagonally across the water. Four people in a passing canoe watch us with interested expressions, their canoe propelled slowly by an elegant lady in a peach-coloured sari, the ripples barely noticeable in the still water. The noisy cement barge moored next to us starts up and is untied. Nothing else as far as the eye can see.. The opposite bank has another waterway behind it and another behind that with the lines of palms stretching into the distance. We are moored on a bank raised up from the water and about eight feet wide with palms along its length. The other side of the bank is a vast paddy field with acres of shimmering pools of shallow water and straight irrigation channels slicing into the distance.



The heavy dull hum of the cement boats recedes into the distance and now only the water lapping around the boat and the birds in the trees can be heard. The canoe returns empty now bar its peach-coloured



sari-clad canoeist. She moors by the only building to be seen, a single-story breeze block shack with a red roof fronted by a substantial landing stage. A green sari-clad lady walks along the narrow bank towards the clearing. She lowers her umbrella and cleans her teeth as she walks. She gives us a big wave and an even bigger smile. A short



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while later we see her returning with a yellow bundle under her arm...and still cleaning her teeth.

As it gets lighter and brighter small droplets of rain appear and sipping our tea in the bows we are under cover but all is open in front of us. Today is October 1<sup>st</sup> and the real world seems far away.

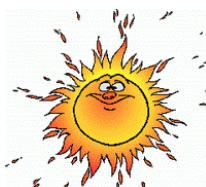
"Dolphin- Luxury Cruise" chugs past. A small ferry boat empty with five red plastic seats on its roof. The dirty exterior and general air of decay belie its grand title. The rain droplets have now stopped and we cast off. Breakfast is served where we sit like pashas...omelette, pancakes, toast, sliced fresh pineapple and tea.

Paradise with a capital "P"

We moor alongside a bank next to a paddy field and we disembark to walk along the narrow bank. Carefully avoiding the roots and holes we are aware of the rapidly setting sun and the colour changes and stillness leaves us speechless.



It is a time that we are so glad to be part of and we just look at the water, the people passing in what appeared to be a deserted landscape but in reality is teeming with life. Suddenly droplets of warm rain hint at an imminent downpour. The droplets quickly turn to heavy rain and as we return to the boat a smiling 'baby' meets us with two welcome umbrellas.





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The following day the boat engines cut on receiving the two rings from the navigator at the bow. We slowly drifted to the quay at the island - we have arrived at Coconut Lagoon. A barrier slowly opens and we enter a wonderful landscaped garden complex interspersed with waterways one of which we are travelling. Magnificent flowers and specimen trees are everywhere.



A uniformed security guard is standing proudly to attention and a serene quietly spoken customer-liason lady clad in a white sari greets us . We sadly shake the hands of the three crew who have become friends over the last two memorable days and they also seem genuinely sad to depart as well. We are led along the narrow lagoons over small bridges past wonderful typical old Kerala dwellings each one different and with its own unique history. Everywhere staff are sweeping leaves, watering specimen flowers and tending to the immaculate lawns which are much coarser than our native varieties. The reception area is open to the elements and we are offered a tender coconut with a straw and a floral gift. A wonderful welcome.

We are shown through the extensive grounds with lagoon views all around and a wild bird sanctuary opposite. Our pool villa is quite spectacular - a single storey Kerala traditional building that has been sympathetically upgraded with air con. Japanese-style sliding double doors open off the lounge onto a double bedroom and that in turn opens into the large bathroom. A walled small private pool is reached from the lounge and shutters from the pool area open onto lush organic basmati fields. A signed carton drawing on the wall gives thanks to the Hotel from Sir Paul Macartney and his wife for a lovely holiday spent there. What was unexpected a beetle in our bed...!!



As we walk through the gardens we see an area of spectacular flowers and the resident naturalist who explains that the flowers and leaves here have been specially planted to attract the magnificent butterflies. They were all around us and each one was an absolute delight. They defied description and were totally untroubled by our presence.



He proudly pointed out all the different species and we even saw one hovering over a leaf and depositing pin-prick-sized eggs on the back of a favoured leaf. In reception the assistant manager introduced himself, he was a friend of Jodi who had met us at Trivendrum airport.

We went to the large restaurant for a snack, rolled-up rattan screened sides overlooked the lush vegetation. Sacred and rare breeds of cows roamed the grounds. We were introduced to the engineer who showed us beetle nut trees and cashew trees. A wonderful traveller tree with splayed branches used to provide water for weary travellers. The angling-free lagoon teemed with striped fish some quite old which were protected. Our snack of golden brown vegetable fritters and local bananas filled with coconut and flavoured cane sugar was delicious.

Taking two proffered umbrellas we walked through the adjacent village. Again a totally different world that we are slowly adjusting to. A haven of unashamed luxury one side of the wall and on the other side a poor but happy village with small but clean dwellings. There appears to be a tacit acceptance of one another and there does not seem to be any obvious resentment. As we walk along the river bank the umbrellas by now being invaluable we are greeted by cheerful waves from everyone. Mothers proudly show off their happy spotless babies all in wonderful colourful dresses with necklaces and bracelets on both arms and legs. Old ladies are loading grass onto a canoe low in the water and a young man proudly lifts his fishing net to show us his small catch for the evening meal. A man shoes a cow with calf at its udder from his vegetable patch back to its proper grazing area by the river.

The orange clad Buddhists smile a greeting outside their ornate but simple temple.....

**The holiday continued but the diary did not...too much to see and not enough time to write. The photos continued and are a happy souvenir from a memorable holiday.....**



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This seems like an apt time to close what is now together as volume 3 in the Photo History.

As usual it has been a year of change, an exciting year with high points and the inevitable low points. The world seems to be changing rapidly with terrorism almost being accepted. Atrocities almost daily from all countries and guns much more prevalent over here...it is not a good legacy that my generation are leaving to the next.

Ben and Tammy are eagerly waiting to see if their sale goes through-this Tuesday will hopefully see the exchange and then they can settle in their new house near us secure in the knowledge that it is theirs (or will be when the mortgage is paid off). Larnie has been with us for two nights while Tammy & Ben had a short 1 year anniversary break in the Cotswolds. Larnie was great fun and came out with Lynn and myself when we did deliveries. She is growing up and is a very single minded and determined girl. She will go far with that personality, possibly upsetting some people en route but she will never be a fool or a sheepish follower. The boys like wise are growing up and we hope to go en-famile skating at Somerset House again at Christmas. Ben seems happy and so does Tammy. Mum is great and still active. Her hearing is a small problem but she has a wicked sense of humour and still gets around to friends and comes here to us often. We speak daily and she gets quite annoyed if we are late in phoning her. She still moans at me for my short haircut...I'm 60 in about 8 weeks and she still treats me like a kid!!! Lynn is possibly the best wife anyone could ask for. She is fun, loving, selfless and thoughtful. She is generous and I feel that I am a lucky guy having her by my side. Yes she nags but possibly I need a nudge...(OK I need a kick up the bum!!).

Martin & Maxine have sold up in Edmonton and move on Tuesday, initially in with Kieron but into their bungalow up north shortly after that. Sue and Leon are still friends and we eat out with them from time to time. Sue and David are off to Kerala in January and are great friends as are Vivienne and Walter. Viv's Mum is quite unwell and is a worry at present. Colin and Lorraine sadly seem to be at a break-up point and having been so close with them for so long it is a sad time. Ros and Mike seem happy in their new abode in Repton Park and it is very grand. Ros has a difficult time coping with her Mums ill health.

A year of progress business-wise - lots of interesting new customers and the web site goes from strength to strength



All in all, I have everything to be thankful for- great family, great friends and a great life ...and I AM THANKFUL.....